

Several measures have been taken to improve the condition of farmers. These include enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; reforming agricultural markets and widespread use of post harvest technology, and putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.

The Government of India has also recently approved a rehabilitation package for 31 suicide prone Districts in the four States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

Controlling bird flu

278. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether bird flu situation is quite under control and regular countrywide surveillance mechanism is on to check any possible outbreak in the future;

(b) whether according to experts around 150 types of bird flu are lurking;

(c) whether there is a worldwide concern over the bird flu among US and various other countries;

(d) if so, whether bird flu has affected poultry export which is at present nil; and

(e) if so, what steps Government propose to take to check bird flu in the future and improve the poultry exports which has suffered a great loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir. India has declared freedom from Avian Influenza on 11.8.2006.

(b) Bird flu is broadly categorized into two *i.e.* HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) and LPAI (Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza).

In other way Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) has been classified on the basis of Hemagglutinin (H) and Neuraminidase (N) antigens. As on date

16H (H1-H16) and N (N1-N9) subtypes have been recognized. All the 15 H and 9 N in all possible combinations have been reported from domesticated and wild bird apart from the H16 subtype which has only been recently identified.

(c) Yes, Sir. World Health Organisation (WHO) has sounded a global alert on Avian influenza and possibility of human pandemic.

(d) Restriction on export of poultry and poultry products from India were imposed after outbreak of Avian Influenza by some countries. Most, of these countries have relaxed these restrictions after declaration of disease free status.

(e) For early detection of Bird Flu and its control and containment at its source, the Government of India has taken the following measures:-

1. An active surveillance programme is being carried out ail over the country focusing on early detection of the disease.
2. India has a fully equipped Bio-Security Level 4 laboratory at Bhopal. More than 85000 samples have been tested at Bhopal after the first outbreak of Avian Influenza in February, 2006.
3. Targeted surveillance will focus on areas where outbreak took place *i.e.* areas visited by migratory birds with poultry concentrations around them and areas of major poultry population.
4. Personnel of Animal Husbandry and Forest Departments are being regularly trained in sample collection and dispatch.
5. Joint mechanisms are in existence between the Health, Forests and Animal Husbandry sectors at the Central and the State levels and have been fully operationalized.
6. The Government of India is maintaining strategic reserve of Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE).
7. The Govemment of India has maintained strategic reserve of poultry vaccine. The option of vaccination is thus available to the country. However, vaccination has not yet been introduced in the country.

Crop diversification

279. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are often stressing on diversification of crop / production;

(b) if so, whether this recommendation is followed by any study in demand structure for such productions in the domestic market;